

Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive system of personnel development (Section 1010(a) (7) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

(a) Data System on personnel and personnel development

A training consultant was hired by DDS/RSA in fiscal year 2009 to assist the agency in the development of an in-house data system to analyze and track annual personnel needs and personnel development. The data system includes a CSPD Annual Individual Training Plan, Instructions for completion of the Training Plan and CSPD College Checklist. The Administration is in the process of developing annual employee profiles that will be maintained within the Office of Program Supports. The Office of Program Supports in conjunction with the DDS Human Resources will track and document counselor college courses and in-service training credits for CRC certification and/or maintenance. In addition, the Office of Program Supports will provide information to supervisors, counselors and support staff of relevant training opportunities to enhance service delivery to our customers.

(1) Qualified Personnel Needs

A. Number of personnel in relation to the number of individuals served

The total number of personnel employed by the Administration in the provision of providing vocational rehabilitation service is **116**. The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor total number is **39**. The total number of support staff for VR counselors is **9**. Total estimated population served is **6,500** individuals with disabilities. The average counselor ratio is **165:1**

B. Number of personnel currently needed by the agency to provide vocational services by personnel category

The total number of personnel currently needed by the Administration to provide VR Services

Supervisors: 3
Counselors: 10
Support staff: 6

During FY 10 to date, the agency has lost 4 counselors due to resignations or other reasons.

Attachment 4.10 Draft

C. Projections of the number of personnel, by personnel category

The estimate of the number of persons needed by the agency to provide VR services over the next five years is based on the estimate of the number of persons expected to retire or leave the agency with the next five years.

STAFF	PROGRAM	ATTRITION	RETIREMENT
10 Supervisors	VR	0	7
54 VR Counselors	VR	0	7
15 Rehab Assistants	VR	1	2

At this time, there are seven (7) individuals in supervisory positions and seven (7) vocational rehabilitation counselors planning for retirement in the next five (5) years. A total of 17 staff are expected to retire or leave the field

Several current staff members are gearing up to complete courses and course requirements to enable them to sit for the CRC and will complete their trek in 1-2 years and obtain Master's degrees in Counseling. With vigorous recruitment efforts in place and current VR staff preparing to become certified and obtain Master's Degrees, the Administration anticipates that we will meet the standards based on state requirements and regulations.

Attachment 4.10 (a)(2)

A. Institutions of higher education preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals

The following institutions of higher education prepare vocational rehabilitation professionals: The George Washington University; University of Maryland, College Park; University of Maryland, Eastern Shore; and, Coppin State University. A number of on-line programs are available across the country without regard to physical jurisdiction.

B. Number of students enrolled at institutions, by type of program

Several current staff members plan to complete courses and course requirements to enable them to sit for the CRC.

Currently, one (1) counselor is enrolled in the Master's Program at The George Washington University. Counselors are enrolled in core courses that will prepare them to sit for the CRC. With vigorous recruitment efforts in place and current VR staff preparing to become certified, the Administration anticipates we will meet the standards based on state requirements and regulations.

C. Number of students who graduated during the prior year, by personnel category and certification or licensure.

The DDS/RSA had no students to graduate from any of the above cited institutions in fiscal year 2009.

Attachment 4.10 (b)

Plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel

The Administration recently began recruiting counselors at the desired grade 12 pay level, the highest grade level for a rehabilitation counselor. Applicants at this level must have completed a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling with at least two (2) years of experience and CRC.

The Administration has formally established a recruitment plan which addresses the hiring of a sufficient number of vocational rehabilitation counselors within DDS/RSA. Current recruitment efforts include (1) posting vacancy announcements on the D.C. Office of Personnel website, and (2) posting vacancy announcements at community programs.

The recruitment plan consists of two major goals:

Goal 1: Expand recruitment efforts

Objective 1.1 Contact graduate school programs and develop relationships with the program chairs. Obtain appropriate contact information to mail notices of job openings

Objective 1.2 Schedule attendance at job fairs at colleges and universities

Objective 1.3 Develop opportunities for paid and non-paid internships with colleges and universities

Goal 2: Increase retention efforts

Objective 2.1 Initiate DDS/RSA new counselor orientation program

Objective 2.1 Increase opportunities for professional growth through increased opportunities for continuous learning through in-service training and workshops

Objective 2.3 Expand opportunities for employee recognition

The Department on Disability Services (DDS) Office of Human Capital has established a formalized exit interview process with all staff leaving the agency. The purpose of the interview is to determine the reason an employee is separating from employment with the agency, if they have recommendations to improve the quality of services; and, learn about their experience with the agency.

The Administration encompasses a uniquely diverse staff. Currently, it has 25 bilingual staff. We are continuing to expand our outreach to attract employees proficient in Spanish and sign language.

Attachment 4.10 (c) Personnel Standards

(1) Standards consistent with nationally or state approved certification

The Administration bases its personnel standards for VR counselors on the degree needed to meet the national CRC requirements through CRCC. New hires as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must have a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or Counseling. To-date, all of our staff have master degrees. We have approximately 18 counselors who cannot sit for the CRCC examination. Additionally, we have one counselor in school who will soon become a Licensed Professional Counselor.

# of Certified Rehabilitation Counselors	# of Counselors eligible to sit for the CRC	# of Counselors staff with Master Degrees	# of staff with Bachelor Degrees
4 – Counselors 2 – Supervisors 1 – VR Specialist 1 – Monitor 3 - Chiefs	16	All 38 Counselors have Master degrees	0

(2) Strategies to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet the standards

The Office of Vocational Supports requested copies of staff transcripts and copies of their master degrees. The majority of the staff complied and submitted this information. There has been discussion with the CRCC and with a representative on the committee from The George Washington University to determine if the staff determined eligible under D4 will still be eligible to sit for the CRCC examination.

A DDS Human Resources Specialist notified the ASME Local 2401 union about the pending letters that were given to the Vocational Rehabilitation Specialists because of the CSPD requirements. On March 18, 2010, staff were notified and given their CSPD letter; and, they acknowledged by their signature that they had received the letter.

We requested that staff return the letters on March 25, 2010. Of the 37 counselors who received the letters, a majority returned their letters to the Office of Human Capital and plan to pursue certification. The Administration has established the follow process to assist counselors to meet CSPD requirements:

1. The Administration will pay for 3 credit hours a semester including books for on-line or classroom courses.

Attachment 4.10 Draft

2. The Administration will pay the one- time cost of the CRC examination.
3. The Administration will allot hours during the work day for staff to attend training.
4. After negotiation with a university offering the rehabilitation counseling program, the Administration will arrange to offer courses on site.

(3) Plan for retraining , recruitment and hiring of personnel

(A) Specific strategies for retraining, recruiting and hiring personnel

Jobs are listed on the D.C. Department of Human Resources website. The Administration currently collaborates with The George Washington University and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The Administration has hosted interns from both universities and has recruited numerous staff from both of these Rehabilitation Counseling programs.

The Administration will assist counselors with Master's degrees in taking core courses that will allow them to sit for the CRC exam. In addition, the Administration will encourage staff to enroll in Master's degree programs in rehabilitation counseling. The Administration will assist staff with 3 credit hours per semester and pay for staff to sit for the CRC examination.

Additionally, the Administration has launched outreach activities in the community as well as at vocational training programs, colleges and universities to attract young professionals interested in embarking on a career in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling.

Attachment 4.10(c) Personnel Standards

B. Time frames to meet the standards

The Administration notified counselors by letter of the CSPD requirement in March, 2010. The labor union was notified of the federal requirements. All staff must complete CSPD requirements by October 1, 2015. The Administration will implement incremental time frames to ensure that all staff who pledge to complete university programs can do so before the deadline. Follow-up contact will be made with each counselor on an individual basis to formalize the proposed training plan and checklist of required college courses based on the formal analysis of their transcripts from the selected university program. As of October 1, 2015, any remaining VR counselor who does not meet the CSPD requirement can no longer perform the duties of a “qualified rehabilitation counselor”.

C. Procedures for evaluating progress in hiring and retraining personnel

1. Finalize and clarify any remaining issues with Human Resources and the local union
2. Finalize review of counselor transcripts and initiate follow-up contact with counselors to develop a formalized training plan.
3. Clarify procedures for requesting training with all staff.
4. Clarify responsibilities of designated staff within the Office of Vocational Supports related to monitoring and evaluating CSPD performance on all employees.
5. Maintain up-to-date records of training activities.

Annually, all DDS/RSA staff receive an e-performance evaluation from their immediate supervisor. The employee will update the training plan along with their supervisor. The Office of Vocational Supports will track receipt of the plans and monitor compliance.

D. Identification of initial minimum requirements

The desired minimum state requirement for the Administration is a Master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling and CRC eligible. If, after extensive recruitment efforts, the Administration is unable to find acceptable candidates meeting the desired qualifications, new hires will be limited to candidates with Master’s degrees in counseling, special education, social

Attachment 4.10 Draft

work, psychology or related fields. A condition of employment will require the candidate to enroll in an approved graduate program in rehabilitation counseling with the goal of obtaining a Master's degree and CRC certification.

The agency will pay a minimum of three credit hours per semester.

Attachment 4.10 (d) Staff Development

(1)System of Staff Development with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement and rehabilitation technology.

Over the last two years, supervisors and staff have received exclusive training, attended conferences and incentives to enhance their knowledge of best practices for quality service delivery. Training received through TACE at The George Washington University included supported employment and independent living, ethics and VR case management.

Additional training included:

- (1)Veteran's Administration Breakfast Forum on Veterans Returning from the War with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury,
- (2)Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities, Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Service Annual Conference
- (3) PESI training on Counseling Strategies and Techniques for Veterans and their Families
- (4)Benefits Training sponsored by the National Disability Institute
- (5) Creative Job Placement Strategies sponsored by TransCen
- (6)ADA training, Workplace Accommodations for Persons with Mental Illness
- (7) Annual CSAVR Meeting and Training sessions
- (8) Case Management Information Systems, System 7 by Libera, Inc. which began in May, 2010.

The Administration counselors underwent intensive training with training consultant, Barbara Lewis, a certified rehabilitation counselor from August of 2009 through February 2010. All aspects of the vocational rehabilitation process were covered in the training including case management, caseload management, vocational assessment, eligibility and IPE development, job placement and development. The training was approved through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. Six (6) intensive 2 day phases of training were conducted covering the federal regulations, ethics for rehabilitation counselors, policy and procedures and applied aspects of the VR process.

Objectives of the training were multi-faceted addressing issues such as state and federal regulations, informed choice, transition services, supported employment eligibility and Order of Selection, case file documentation, intermediate objectives and service delivery coordination with employers. Additionally, the Administration launched outreach activities in the community as well as vocational training programs and colleges and universities to attract young professionals interested in embarking on a

career in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling.

An Administration staff within the Office of Vocational Supports has been charged with the responsibility to seek out, plan and coordinate on-site and off site training opportunities for staff on an on-going basis.

Additionally, the agency has launched outreach activities in the community as well as vocational training programs and colleges and universities to attract young professionals interested in embarking in a career in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling.

Attachment 4.10 (e) Personnel to Address Communication Needs

The Administration will continue to employ personnel who are able to communicate in the native languages of applicants for services and clients who have limited English speaking ability. The Administration provides accommodations for special communication needs such as interpreters, specialized services and materials for individuals who are deaf, blind or deaf-blind. Sign language skills are considered a minimum qualification for positions providing services to persons who are deaf and/or hearing impaired. The Administration's services population continues to expand because of increased outreach efforts. The service population includes Latinos, Chinese and Vietnamese. The bilingual capacity of the staff is as follows:

Staff who speak Spanish

- 1 Manager
- 2 Counselors
- 1 Transition Specialist
- 3 Rehabilitation Assistants
- 1 Employment Coordinator

Staff who speak Chinese

- 1 Counselor

Staff who are fluent in American Sign Language

- 2 Managers
- 2 Counselors
- 1 Placement Specialist

Staff who speak French

- 1 counselor

Attachment 4.10 (f) Coordination of personnel developments under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Administration staff receives training on a continuous basis. The Administration is fully committed to providing transition services. The agency currently employs four (4) transition specialists. The transition specialists received specific training on transition services from Mrs. Barbara Lewis, training consultant. Several managers and staff recently attended the *Annual National Community of Practices in Transition Conference* in North Carolina. Two (2) agency staff, a program manager and counselor along with a representative from the District of Columbia Public Schools visited the California Department of Rehabilitation Services and several public school sites to observe and review cooperative agreements and collaborative working relationships in the implementation of transition services.

Attachment 4.10
Fiscal Year 2011 State Plan
Page 11 of x Pages